

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

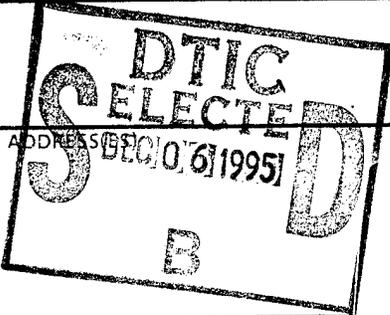
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank) 2. REPORT DATE 3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
FINAL REPORT 15 Jun 92 - 14 Jun 95

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
HIGH POWER, HIGH EFFICIENCY MESFETs AND HEMT_s

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

61103D
3484/S3

6. AUTHOR(S)
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8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
AFOSR-TR-95
0765

F49620-92-J-0366

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
AFOSR/NE
110 Duncan Avenue Suite B115
Bolling AFB DC 20332-0001

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12a. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (Include the following keywords)

19951205 032

For the duration of the project dated above, the work on the AASERT program concentrated on improving the power performance of GaAs MESFETs with LTG GaAs surface passivation layers by studying the effects of source and drain contacts regrown by MOCVD on both device breakdown and gain.

14. SUBJECT TERMS 15. NUMBER OF PAGES

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT: UNCLASSIFIED
18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE: UNCLASSIFIED
19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT: UNCLASSIFIED
20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

High Power, High Efficiency MESFETs and HEMTs

Project # : AFOSR-F49620-92-J-0366

Dates : 6/15/92 - 6/14/95

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ABSTRACT:

For the duration of the project dated above, the work on the AASERT program concentrated on improving the power performance of GaAs MESFETs with LTG GaAs surface passivation layers by studying the effects of source and drain contacts regrown by MOCVD on both device breakdown and gain.

Breakdown Behavior:

The breakdown in GaAs based FETs occurs at either or both of the regions where electric field peaks in the device, the drain edge of the gate and the gate edge of the drain. The gate breakdown is currently being addressed by utilizing LTG GaAs passivation to alleviate the surface field (under AFOSR-F49620-94-1-0040). The drain field, however, increases in this arrangement because of exacerbated current crowding at the drain because of the lack of an effective gate recess. Figure 1 schematically compares the current flow in LTG GaAs FETs and conventional FETs. The increase in the field leads to instabilities in the drain characteristics at high current levels and premature breakdown. To address this issue we have investigated regrown ohmic contacts by MOCVD.

Device Characteristics with Regrown Contacts:

The typical device structure studied is shown in figure 2. The source and drain regions were grown selectively by MOCVD using SiO_2 as a mask. The non-alloyed ohmic contact resistance in devices with the regrown contacts is similar to the best alloyed contacts (0.1ohm-mm). The advantages of the regrown contact are that:

- (i) the non-alloyed contact is extremely **stable**,
- (ii) there is **no spiking** of the contacts and hence no regions of high field concentration, and
- (iii) there is **no hole injection** from n+ regions as opposed to alloyed metals.

The third advantage bears explanation as it has great impact on the reliability of the FET. As shown in Figure 3 the high electric field near the metal coupled with a narrowed band gap adjacent to the alloyed metal causes

injection of valence band electrons into the metal, or equivalently hole injection from the metal. The injected hole current drifts towards the source and the gate electrode. The lateral current density (A/mm) gets converted into a very high areal current density (A/cm²) as it flows into the gate leading to failure. In the case of the regrown contacts

- (i) the hole density is extremely small in the n+ regions, and
- (ii) the field is effectively quenched before reaching the drain metal.

Both have the effect of substantially relieving instabilities and improving device reliability.

Results:

Figure 4 shows the I-V characteristic of devices with and without regrown contacts. The devices with regrown contacts have extremely stable I-V characteristics and can sustain much larger voltages at full channel current. Since this is the bias condition that maximizes drain field, it is clear that regrown contacts have relieved the field effectively. The active device parameters such as gm and Idss are similar for devices using either contact technology. We therefore believe that though further study is needed to quantify each current component, regrown ohmic contacts will find increasing use in high reliability power applications.

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Figure Captions:

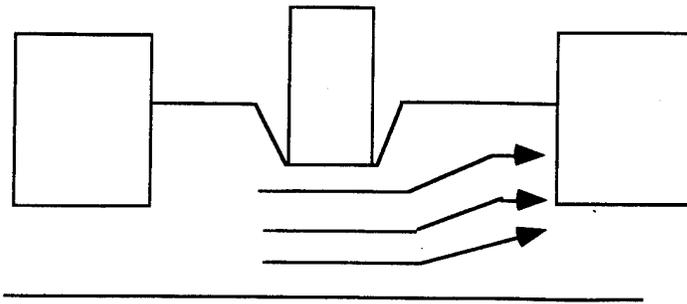
Figure 1 : a) Currents flow in a conventional MESFET. b) Currents flow in a MESFET with LTG-GaAs passivation.

Figure 2: Schematic cross-section of a device with MOCVD selective regrown source/drain contacts.

Figure 3: Holes injection from the metal into the channel at the drain contacts.

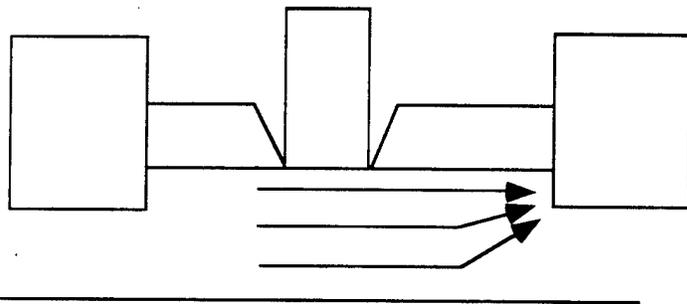
Figure 4: a) Current-voltage characteristics of a device with conventional contacts. b) Current-voltage characteristics of a device with regrown source/drain contacts.

a)

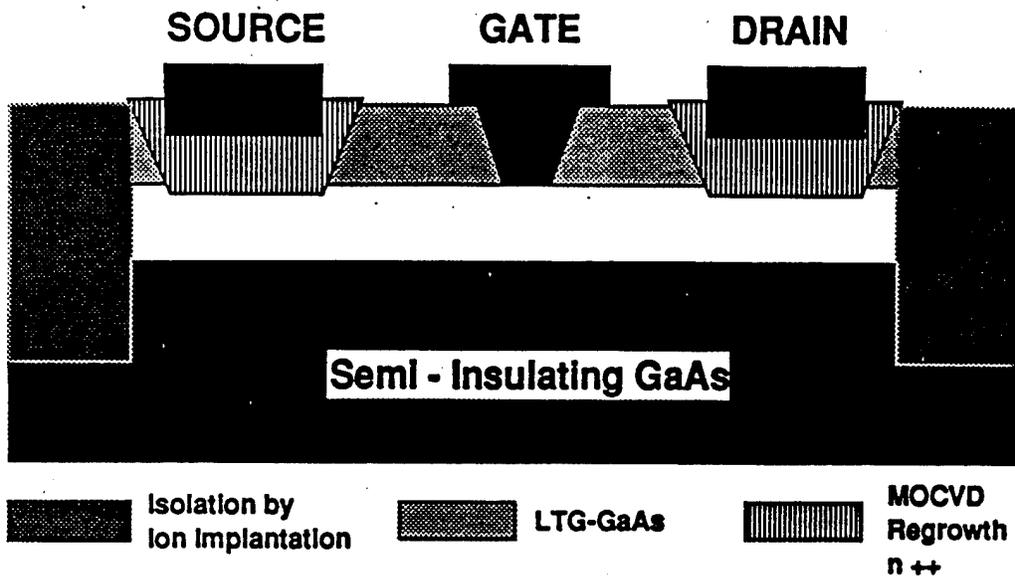


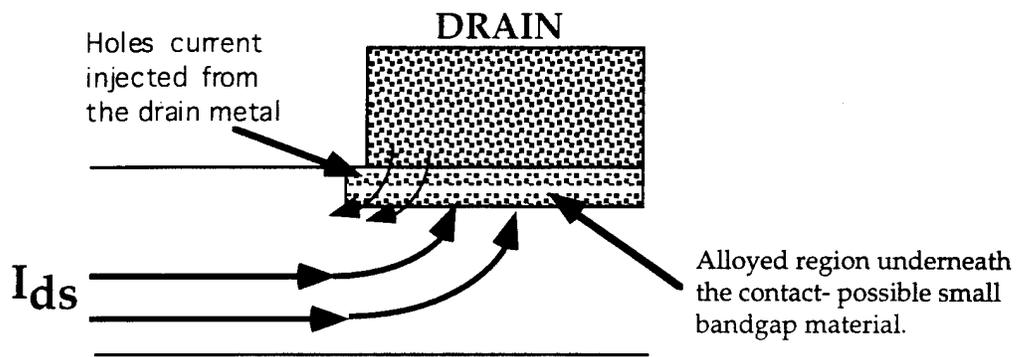
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b)

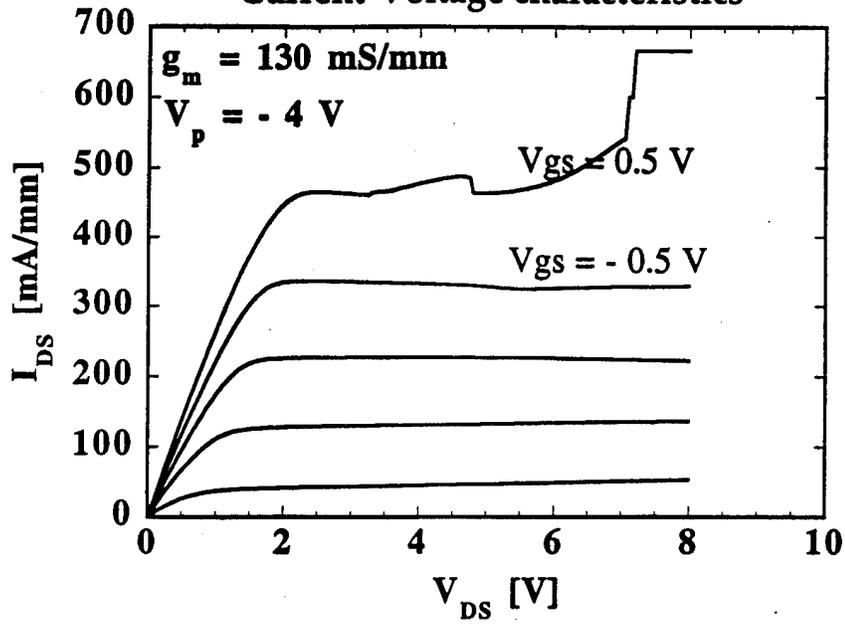


high field region	high field region
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Current-Voltage characteristics



Current-Voltage characteristics

